

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. A large saguaro cactus is silhouetted against a sky with orange, pink, and blue hues. In the lower-left foreground, a person is silhouetted standing with their hands on their hips, looking towards the horizon.

# **Governor's Conference on Aging 2002**

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## **REPORT**



## A Report of the Governor's Conference on Aging 2002

**T**he Governor's Conference on Aging 2002, Active Aging: Opportunities and Challenges, was held on May 14-16, 2002 at the Radisson City Center, 181 W. Broadway, in Tucson. Over 600 people attended the conference and pre-conference intensive sessions. Participants were a mix of working professionals, families, and older adults. Senior citizens comprised 35 percent of those registered. More than 60 percent of the participants hailed from outside Pima County, with people coming from every Arizona county and many neighboring states. The Governor's Conference on Aging is the largest statewide aging issues conference in Arizona.



*Dr. Henry Koffler,  
Governor's Conference on  
Aging Chair*

The theme of the conference reflected the new attitudes on the concepts of aging. There needs to be a wider spectrum of opportunities, services, and housing than ever before to meet the growing diversity of older adults.



*At the Governor's Conference on Aging 2002 were (left to right) Dilbert Nunez, Past President of Pima Council on Aging Katie Dusenberry, Governor's Conference on Aging Chair Henry Koffler, President/CEO of Civic Adventures Marc Feedman, and Governor's Advisory Council on Aging Executive Director Barry Gold.*

The conference was highly rated by the participants. One of five participants completed the conference evaluations that were collected at the end of the conference. On a scale of 1 to 5, with five being the highest mark, participants gave the conference a 4.09 for overall satisfaction. The individual speakers and workshops tended to have even higher ratings.

**Marc Freedman, President and CEO of Civic Ventures** opened the conference with his presentation on “Coming of Age: How the Aging of America Can Revitalize Our Country.” Mr. Freedman focused his talk on utilizing the experiences and talents of older adults to make positive contributions in their communities. He discussed volunteer opportunities and other methods of community involvement.



*Marc Freedman spoke on volunteer opportunities and community involvement.*

Both the style and the content of Mr. Freedman’s speech were well received. Participants gave Mr. Freedman’s presentation 4.39 out of 5 points, and 4.46 for the information he provided. A number of participants also noted in their written comments that he was an excellent speaker.



*Mac McCrory, Director of the Sereteen Wellness Centers, gave a dynamic presentation of “Living the Healthy Life.”*

**Mac McCrory, Director of the Sereteen Wellness Center at Oklahoma State University**, opened the last day of the conference with a motivational speech, “Living a Healthy Life.” His speech was very dynamic and also received very high ratings, 4.83 out of 5 for presentation and 4.73 for content. He explained that the process for making healthy lifestyle choices is a multi-step process. Through use of examples and short stories he demonstrated how people must first make a choice, change their behavior, and establish a routine to create healthy lifestyle habits.

The Conference achieved the goal of offering a variety of personal and professional growth issues for both seniors and professionals. The Conference was structured around four key tracks: health and wellness; caregiving; economic development; and policy and trends. Each track highlighted a main plenary speaker and nine to eleven workshops addressing different topics in each track. Eight poster sessions and ten community organizations were scheduled to exhibit at specific times so participants could explore specialized programs and learn about statewide resources. There were five pre-conference intensive sessions focusing on important issues in a more in-depth and detailed review.

One of the highlights of the event was the Anne Lindeman Scholarship Awards presentation held during the Conference reception. Kristofer Lindeman, Anne’s son, presented the scholarships to three students who attend Arizona universities. Ashley Sierra Curren, Rhea Jasmin Go, and



*Anne Lindeman Scholarship Awards were presented by Kristofer Lindeman (far right) to three students of Arizona universities during the Conference Reception.*



Jennifer Christman were the recipients of the first annual scholarships. They all have achieved high academic standards, and demonstrated a commitment to improving the lives of Arizona residents. Entertainment at the reception was an intergenerational experience. The Utterback Middle School Jazz Band played swing and big band sounds. The Goodtime Singers followed with a medley of songs from romantic to patriotic.



*The Tucson Goodtime Singers gave a rousing performance at the Conference Reception.*

The Governor's Conference Awards are given to the Outstanding Individual and Corporation that have demonstrated dedication and leadership in assisting older adults. The awards are chosen from nominations submitted by advocates in the aging network across the state. The Council was pleased to present the Outstanding Corporate Award to the Arizona Alzheimer's Research Center, a unique combination of eight institutions across Arizona who joined together into a cohesive consortium dedicated to the scientific advancement of improved early diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's Disease. The Outstanding Individual Award was presented to **Paul Peterson, a volunteer with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Department**, who has spent countless hours educating the community on the File of Life Program.



*Paul Peterson (right), a Yavapai County Sheriff's Department volunteer, receives the Outstanding Individual Award from Executive Director Barry Gold.*

The conference continues to be self-sustaining, with funds coming from sponsorships and registration fees. Keeping in mind the economic hardship on businesses and the community from September 11, the Council's Director and staff took an affirmative approach to make the conference even more affordable for both senior citizens and professionals without sacrificing quality. Sponsorships and changes in event structure enabled this to happen. The evening banquet was eliminated, and there was no additional cost for the Older Americans Month Luncheon. These changes enabled the cost to be reduced by over 50% for seniors and 40% for professionals. Sponsorships from the Area Agencies on Aging for the luncheon, and DES, Aging and Adult Administration for printing assisted the Council to recruit nationally known experts to the event and also reduce the registration fees. Holding the conference completely within one hotel site contained costs, as there were no set-up or decorating costs.

The Governor's Conference on Aging 2002 gave older adults and professionals working on aging issues an opportunity to meet, discuss important issues, and learn new information and ideas about innovative programs and methods. This is best reflected in some of the

participants' comments from the evaluations:

- “Appreciated the positive start on aging, lots of great helpful information. We are changing the concept of aging to some rite of passage to look forward to!”
- “I was so thrilled to find some kindred spirits who are interested in the topic of Spirituality and Aging. The networking I’ve done here is invaluable. I have found some people to work with in this area.”
- “Thanks, I learned a lot.”



*Over 600 participants attended the Governor’s Conference on Aging 2002.*

Conference participants also gave valuable feedback on improving the event in the future.

## Summary

“Active Aging: Opportunities and Challenges” provided a forum for the community to come together to explore issues, programs, and services that relate to aging. Older adults, families, and professionals all utilized this opportunity to learn about the newest innovations, share experiences, and consider new ideas for the future. The conference facilitated the ability to better care for the older population now and in the future.



*Barry Gold, Executive Director  
of the Arizona Governor’s  
Advisory Council on Aging*

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